

## International destinations: See two for the price of one

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If you are traveling to an international destination, you may be able to stop in a connecting city for free and see two cities for the price of one.

Looking at Europe, for example, there are a number of airlines that will give you free stopovers en route, including American, British Airways, US Airways and Swiss Airlines. Right now, flights to Moscow, St. Petersburg and Istanbul, some of the cheapest destinations in Europe, allow free stops along the way.

In most cases you won't find these free stopovers if your final destination is in Western Europe. When you travel to other international destinations outside of Europe, you have a better chance of getting a free stopover.

When you're flying to almost any Caribbean or Central American destination on American or US Airways, you can make a free stop in select cities within the U.S. Remember that Dallas is a stopover point, so if you have friends and family who are traveling to the Caribbean, they could stop over in Dallas for free.

We are also seeing free stops on trips to Mumbai, New Delhi and Johannesburg. At press time, British Airways was offering Mumbai and New Delhi flights for as low as \$849 round trip from Dallas for departure through Feb. 2. You could stop in London for free with this fare.

### Think strategically

One thing to think about is that your stopover may actually be your desired destination, but it may be cheaper to fly to a different final destination. For example, if you want to go to London, it may be cheaper to fly to Istanbul and make a stop in London on your outbound or return trip. We looked at flights departing on Oct. 28 and returning on Nov. 4, and it cost \$952 to fly to Istanbul with a free stopover on American. A round trip from Dallas to London on the same dates was \$1,225.

Be aware that not all airlines offer a free stopover. When we priced the Istanbul trip, the cheapest fare was \$889 on three airlines, none of which offered stopovers. For \$63 more, you could fly on American and get a stopover.

At press time, Emirates was selling tickets to New Delhi and Mumbai with a free stopover in Dubai and Milan. Swiss Airlines is offering two free stops en route to Zurich, Geneva, Frankfurt, Munich or Brussels, so you could get a

multicity European trip with one fare.

Delta does not offer free stopovers on flights to Moscow or Istanbul, but it does to Johannesburg. With its code-share partners Air France, KLM and Alitalia, Delta allowed two free stops in Paris, Rome or Amsterdam, so you could fly to Johannesburg, stop in Paris on your outbound trip and stop in Amsterdam on the return trip. At press time it would cost \$1,366 round trip, which is one of the cheapest flights offered to Johannesburg. If you're going to Johannesburg, why not see two great European cities and break up your trip at no additional cost?

We've seen stops offered for a fee to and from Hawaii. If you have friends on the East Coast, they can stop in Dallas for around \$60 more on the way to or from Hawaii. From Dallas, you could make a stop at one of many West Coast cities on your way to or from Hawaii for an additional \$60.

### Gateway cities

You also may want to look at flying from other gateway cities to international destinations. Finnair recently offered New York to Moscow for \$549, with a free stop in Helsinki. Finnair doesn't fly out of Dallas, but you could purchase a round trip to New York and fly from there and

spend some time in New York on your outbound or return trip. At press time, Dallas to New York fares were \$260 round trip, so you could visit New York, Helsinki and Moscow for \$809.

If you are heading to Asia or the South Pacific, look at Los Angeles fares and you could find stopovers in Singapore, Tokyo and even Hong Kong. If you want to go to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and even Asia, you can find more carriers out of New York City with many options of one or two free stopovers. Houston often has cheaper fares than Dallas to Europe, and you can get a free stopover in Istanbul on Turkish Airlines.

If you want to travel the world and see more destinations for the same buck, or maybe even less, free stop-

overs could be the ticket.

*Tom Parsons is editor of bestfares.com.*



Kerem Uzel/Bloomberg News

**If you're headed** to Istanbul, you might be able to make a free stopover in London on some airlines.